

basic fact that active, united support by the public of all measures—educational, medical, protective—directed against the venereal diseases is the key to victory against these infections.

"If these are strengthened, the new discoveries—especially the modern intensive therapy of syphilis and the penicillin treatment of gonorrhea—may make it possible, in the not too distant future, to bring venereal diseases completely under control."

The U. S. Public Health Service, in this connection, said that there has been an increase of 11 per cent in cases of gonorrhea among civilians, partly because of attempts at self-treatment with sulfa drugs. Individuals, it was explained, considered they had cured themselves in this manner when actually they "remained sources of infection."

**Fewer Fatal Accidents in 1943.**—Studies reveal there are many reasons why one might well have expected the accident toll in 1943 to rise to a very high level. It was a year of dimouts and blackouts; a year of very intense industrial activity, with large numbers of inexperienced hands, including many women and boys, employed in a variety of unfamiliar tasks; and a year in which the armed forces were swelled to many times the peacetime total. But whatever fears might have been entertained regarding the accident toll are allayed by the facts now available. The Nation's loss through fatal accidents in 1943, it is now evident, will be in the neighborhood of 91,000 lives, or about 2,000 fewer than last year, and at least 10,000 fewer than in the prewar year 1941. Barring a major catastrophe in the closing days of the year, the accident record in this country for 1943 will probably be the best since the depression years of 1932-33.

The decline in accident fatalities in 1943, as in 1942, was due almost entirely to a falling off in the number of deaths in motor vehicle accidents. Motor vehicle fatalities numbered about 23,000 in 1943—5,000 fewer than last year, and nearly 17,000 fewer than the all-time maximum of 39,981 deaths recorded in 1941. It is necessary to go back to 1925 to find a year in which the automobile toll was as small as in 1943. Quite obviously, the reduction was brought about largely, if not entirely, by curtailed use of gasoline and by other curbs on automobile travel.

Industrial accidents also show a satisfactory record for the year. Despite accelerated industrial activity, there is no indication of an increase in occupational accidents. In fact, it appears likely that occupational accidents will be fewer this year than last. This is a tribute to the effective coöperation of management and labor in the intensified, nationwide safety campaign inaugurated in 1941 by the National Safety Council under a Presidential proclamation.

Fatal accidents in and about the home, on the other hand, will run about 1,000 higher than last year and number around 31,000. Thus, for the second consecutive year, the death toll from home accidents will be higher than that for any other class of accidents, whereas in earlier years motor vehicle accidents had that dubious honor. In the early months of 1943 home accidents rose sharply, perhaps because of the use of supplementary heating devices in areas in which fuel oil was rationed. Another factor that may have affected home safety was the employment in industry of many housewives, a number of whom left children at home.

Catastrophes (those accidents in which at least five persons are killed) took more than 3,200 lives up to the closing days of 1943, or three times the total for the prewar year 1941, and about 500 lives more than in 1942.

Since Pearl Harbor there has been a considerable increase in the number of persons killed in major accidents in service flying, on railroads, in mines, and in explosives manufacturing plants. Fires in public buildings have also taken a large toll of human life in the last two years.

Fortunately, no single disaster in 1943 even approached the death toll of the Boston night club fire in 1942 which took 492 lives. Two railroad accidents—one in Pennsylvania killing 80 persons and another in North Carolina killing at least 72 persons—were, at the time of this writing, the most costly accidents in point of lives lost in 1943. A mine accident in Montana took the lives of 69 persons; 51 suffered fatal injuries in a Texas hotel fire. Two accidents in the State of Washington each took more than 25 lives—the crash of a bomber on an industrial building, and a fire in a sanitarium. The other accidents in which 25 or more persons were killed included a railroad accident in New York State, an explosion at a naval depot in Virginia, the crash of an Army transport plane in North Carolina, and the foundering during maneuvers of an Army transport in Louisiana.

Although a number of catastrophes occurred in explosives manufacturing plants in 1943, the largest toll taken in any of them was 15 lives. The greatest number of deaths in any such accident since Pearl Harbor was 54 lives in Illinois in June, 1942. In marked contrast, during the first World War, the three largest catastrophes in explosives plants in the United States each resulted in the death of about 100 persons.

**Methods of E.M.I.C. Bureau.**—The Children's Bureau administration of medical services given dependents of enlisted men has aroused the indignation of the medical profession, Dr. William Benbow Thompson, of Los Angeles, informed the House Appropriations Committee in testimony made public on May 27.

Dr. Thompson, who said he represented the California Medical Association, told committee members during hearings on the Labor Appropriations Bill:

"It distresses us practicing physicians that we should be cleverly placed in the light of antagonism to a program beneficial to and needed by the wives and children of men fighting to preserve the free institutions of free America.

"We are not so opposed; it is the administration of the program that has aroused our ire."

Dr. Thompson listed as an "example of a bureaucracy run wild" the bureau's requirement that clinics must be along facilities available for "the free choice of the dependents."

"Our established clinics," said Thompson, "are for the indigent. Must these, who cannot go elsewhere, be crowded out by the admission of service dependents? Or are the dependents considered by the bureau as in the pauper class?"

Among objections to financial arrangements, Thompson cited the financial loss which he said hospitals would experience from participation in the program as outlined by the bureau, and claimed that the agency had "ignored" basic considerations in its study of fee schedules.—Los Angeles *Citizen-News*, May 27.

**Press Clippings.**—Some news items from the daily press on matters related to medical practice follow:

#### California Doctors Open 73rd Session

Fifteen hundred leading California doctors, members of the California Medical Association, on May 7th, gathered at the Biltmore for their 73rd annual session.

The meeting was streamlined to meet war conditions, cut to two days because of the pressure of medical work,

without exhibits because of transportation difficulties, and with sessions largely given over to reports of Army and Navy physicians and surgeons.

Topics scheduled for discussion ranged all the way from nervous complaints on the home front to the treatment of the severest of battle injuries.

The initial sessions were high-lighted by a report showing that a strong majority of Californians prefer medical care of their own choosing to any Government-controlled plan, and a symposium of naval doctors telling how modern amputation and artificial limb substitutions will enable a vastly higher percentage of wounded in this war to return to gainful occupations than ever before.

The subject of private versus Government medical care was brought up in a report by John R. Little, vice president of Foote, Cone and Belding, to a C.M.A. house of delegates meeting.

Summarizing findings of a survey made by his firm for the Association, Little said the response showed that the medical profession must make medical care more widely available, especially to middle and lower income brackets, if the danger of Government intervention is to be avoided.

He suggested that the California Physicians' Service, formed by the C.M.A., be made available "to a very large portion of the people of California."—Los Angeles *Examiner*, May 8.

#### State Medical Group Attacks Dr. Fishbein

A resolution attacking Dr. Morris Fishbein of Chicago, outstanding spokesman of American medicine, was adopted by the California Medical Association's House of Delegates, its governing body, yesterday at the final sessions of the two-day meeting of the association here at the Biltmore.

The resolution asked the California delegates to the forthcoming American Medical Association convention in June to work for the dismissal of Dr. Fishbein, who is editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and of *Tygeia*, a publication designed for popular reader interest, particularly of women.

#### Methods Criticized

"Dr. Fishbein," the resolution stated, "has assumed the position of the spokesman for American medicine. But it is felt that he is not representing it properly to the American public."

It was learned that it is the feeling of the California physicians that while Dr. Fishbein is a capable medical journal editor, he has assumed a spokesmanship for organized medicine and conducted himself in a way which has been injurious to its best interest.

Their objection is two-fold, according to members of the association. One is that the Chicagoan has been maladroit in his interpretation to the public of political and medical economic problems. The other is that his relations with legislators have not been the best at a time when the long-time issue of socialized medicine has become a serious menace.

#### Office Set Up

The revolt against Dr. Fishbein has originated in the West, but its proponents believe it will spread over the country. One of the doctors' criticisms of Dr. Fishbein is that organized medicine has established no offices at Washington where legislators could get authoritative information or through which the public could be informed. Such a medium has been initiated by the western medical profession.

At a recent meeting in Salt Lake City delegates from Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona and California decided to form a United Public Health League which would have an office at the national capital.

The convention heard torture methods by Japanese on American and European civilians at Shanghai soon after Pearl Harbor described by Dr. Thomas B. Dunn. . . .—Los Angeles *Times*, May 9.

#### Science

##### Unwanted Spokesman

As its scripture the American Medical Association has the *Journal*, a weekly news organ which cross-examines new medical discoveries, battles the advances of quackery and publishes one of the country's best columns of earthy humor.

As its prophet, the A.M.A. has Dr. Morris Fishbein, the *Journal's* baldish, fiery editor, who hates government health plans almost as much as he does charlatans. In his 30 years on the job, Dr. Fishbein has weathered

many a tempest, both from within and from without the association.

He has been sued by Dr. Painless Parker, whom he called a "charlatan and a quack." This suit ended by both militant figures shaking hands. Another suit, brought by Dr. Asa Brunson whose tuberculosis treatment Fishbein called "a fake of the most dangerous kind," was settled in Fishbein's favor as was one brought by famed goat gland specialist Dr. John Brinkley, likewise called a "quack."

Dr. Fishbein has predicted that ultra-violet rays will eventually turn the white race brown—or beige, debunked vegetarians who won't eat meat lest they become like lions and tigers, or those who urge a savage diet because savages never get cancer.

The pugnacious editor has not hesitated to act as spokesman for the entire medical profession on occasion. Rumbblings from within the A.M.A. have indicated that some of the doctor's colleagues are annoyed by his regal ways. Members of Congress complain that he is difficult to work with, that he refuses to provide information when they are writing their bills, then attacks the bills vigorously when they come on the floor.

Last week the California Medical Association passed a resolution asking its members to work for the dismissal of Dr. Fishbein as editor of the *Journal*. "Dr. Fishbein has assumed the position of spokesman for American medicine," said the resolution, "but it is felt that he is not representing it properly to the American public."—"This World" Sunday supplement of San Francisco *Chronicle*, May 14.

#### U. C. Discovers New Painless Birth Method Paravertebral Nerve Block Said to Have Advantages Over Earlier Caudal Anaesthesia

A new method of making childbirth painless, described by its sponsors as having advantages over the recently introduced treatment called caudal anaesthesia, was announced on June 2 by Dr. Herbert F. Traut, gynecologist at the University of California Medical School.

The new method, paravertebral nerve block, was originated by Dr. Shiras M. Jarvis, former assistant resident physician at the medical school hospital and now with the United States Army. It is done by injecting an anaesthetic into a nerve channel close to but outside of the spinal column, near the small of the back.

This leaves the mother free to move about in bed, Doctor Traut reported, and she can sleep or read, and is free of labor pain.

In caudal anaesthesia the pain killing drug is injected into a nerve channel near the base of the spine. This, Doctor Traut said, lowers the muscular tone of the lower abdomen and sometimes interferes with the natural function of certain muscles during delivery.

This interference does not occur in paravertebral nerve block, Doctor Traut added, because the anaesthetic is applied to a nerve center which governs more selectivity the pain producing mechanism in childbirth labor.—San Francisco *Examiner*, June 3.

#### Organization of Professions

Editor: Professor Einstein's advice to all professions to organize unions if they expect to overcome present serious obstacles is most sound. Though professional men have been inclined to disapprove of the forceful method of unions, yet many of us have come to the conclusion that it is the only way left in order to escape being taken over by some Washington bureau.

The medical profession, the one most seriously in danger at present, has a new organization for this purpose, but it is far too mild and inexperienced to obtain results. It takes harsh union methods to overcome a gang of hungry politicians. Let's get going! Charles E. Mooser, M.D., Oakland.—San Francisco *Chronicle*, June 2.

If the European war ends by December, 1944, it is predicted that a total of some 40,000,000 tons of human food and cattle feed will be necessary to keep the people of twenty nations at reasonable standards of nourishment until their domestic crops are available. The prediction is made by the Food Research Institute, Stanford University.

To safeguard men and women serving in the tropics, America will produce this year 2,500,000 atabrine tablets, the synthetic antimalarial and principal substitute for quinine.